

Feb. 22 / Administration of George Bush, 1991

The coalition remains strong and united.

Note: Press Secretary Fitzwater read this statement to reporters at 12:48 p.m. in the Briefing Room at the White House. The

statement referred to President Mikhail Gorbachev of the Soviet Union, President Saddam Hussein of Iraq, and Secretary of State James A. Baker III.

Statement by Press Secretary Fitzwater on the Persian Gulf Conflict *February 23, 1991*

CENTCOM reports that they have detected no military activity which would indicate any withdrawal of Saddam Hussein from Kuwait. Similarly, there has been no communication between Iraq and the United Nations that would suggest a willingness to withdraw under the conditions of the coalition plan. Iraq continues its scorched earth policy in Kuwait, setting fire to oil facilities. It's a continuing outrage that Saddam Hussein is still intent upon destroying Kuwait and its people, still intent upon destroying the environment of the Gulf, and still intent upon inflicting the most brutal kind of rule on his own population, yet appears to have no intention of complying with the U.N. resolutions. Indeed, his only response at noon was to launch another Scud missile attack on Israel.

The coalition forces have no alternative but to continue to prosecute the war.

As we indicated last night, the withdrawal proposal the Soviets discussed with Tariq 'Aziz in Moscow was unacceptable because it did not constitute an unequivocal commitment to an immediate and unconditional withdrawal. Thus, the Iraqi approval of the Soviet proposal is without effect.

President Bush today spoke with Prime

Minister Kaifu of Japan, President Ozal of Turkey, and President Gorbachev of the Soviet Union. The phone call from President Gorbachev occurred at 11:15 a.m. and lasted for approximately 28 minutes. President Gorbachev informed the President that he asked for a U.N. review of his proposal and said that he had talked to Prime Minister Major and President Mitterrand about his plan. Both of the allied leaders indicated full support for the coalition withdrawal plan. President Bush thanked President Gorbachev for his extensive efforts and reflected our general disappointment that Saddam Hussein has chosen not to respond positively.

Note: The statement referred to the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM); President Saddam Hussein and Foreign Minister Tariq 'Aziz of Iraq; Prime Minister Toshiki of Japan; President Turgut Ozal of Turkey; President Mikhail Gorbachev of the Soviet Union; Prime Minister John Major of the United Kingdom; and President Francois Mitterrand of France. The statement also referred to an allied peace plan that required Iraq to begin withdrawing its forces from Kuwait by noon, e.s.t.

Statement on the Persian Gulf Conflict *February 23, 1991*

We regret that Saddam Hussein took no action before the noon deadline to comply with the United Nations resolutions. We remain determined to fulfill the U.N. reso-

lutions. Military action continues on schedule and according to plan.

Note: The statement referred to President